Clay Geerdes COMIX WAVE 157 ©1994. POB 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707. All Rights Reserved. Artwork and material herein © the artists concerned and used here for promotional purposes only. $12 for the next 12 issues. Checks to Clay Geerdes. Cash or MOs fine.

COMIX PLUGOLA

For a 52¢ stamp you get a copy of Gary Usher's collection of the work of Al Stahl. Stahl did FLATFOOT BURNS for Quality in the 1940s. 205 N. Vine St., Glenwood, IA 51534.

Leonard Nimoy's PRIMORTALS comes out this December from Tekno-Comix. I missed seeing Nimoy, Takei and Nichols in STAR TREK GENERATIONS. Future trivia games will ask who killed Captain Kirk. That would be Soren, the villain played by Malcolm McDowell. After seeing what he did in A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, I always knew McDowell would come to no good end. As for Shatner. Come off it. Drop that shitty attitude toward the character that made your fame and fortune. Like it or not, history will remember James T. Kirk as one of the great television characters of the late sixties; the rest of your acting career might as well not have happened.

Steve Lafler's BUGHOUSE 2 is out. $3.25 from Cat-Head Comics, POB 576, Hudson, MA 01749.

Dan Clowes reveals what he really thinks about sports like football and baseball in EIGHT BALL 14.

Pete Bagge goes into color in HATE 16, but, fear not, his characters remain as acerbic and disagreeable as ever. Every time I read about these people, I feel relieved that I don't know or have to associate with them or anyone like them.

Who is Tom Tomorrow?

Dan Perkins. He is featured in an article in the October 31, 1994, issue of IN THESE TIMES, a quasi-radical magazine for which Terry "Cud" Laban often does the editorial cartoons and spot illos. Perkins is 33 and is on the road hyping his book, TUNE IN TOMORROW [St. Martin's, 1994].

Also on the promo trail is Artie Spiegelman who has found a way to make comic art pay off. You do book books not comic books. Art has illustrated a reprinting of Joseph Moncure March's THE WILD PARTY [New York: Pantheon, 1994], originally published in 1928.

The premiere issue of Steve Willis' NEWAVE READER is $2 from him. POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390. This is mainly a collection of articles which were published elsewhere, but my memoir about COMIX WORLD was done specifically for the READER. Jim Ryan's art for the cover of COMIX WAVE #1 is reprinted on the cover. I like this project. Hope to see it continue with some feedback from other people who participated in the mini adventure. The whole trip expanded all over the country and is bigger now than it ever was when a handful of us were drawing and publishing most of the books. I like to think we had something to do with inspiring the trend, but I think it had more to do with the availability of better and better copy machines. A lot of the local minis and DZs I see around were drawn and published by people working at local copy shops. Free access to the technology inspires a lot of art and poetry. A complete list of all the past and present zines would fill several volumes and be obsolete on publication since the new ones come out so fast.

The trials and tribulations of Florida cartoonist Michael Diana are detailed by Sean Henry in "Comic Threat," in the November issue of MOTHER JONES. pp 67 ff. Some of the drawings from BOILED ANGEL, the DZ that got him busted, tried, and sent to jail are described. In one "a child is sodomized by his adoptive father, who is killed by the family dog. The boy things he's finally free until the dog picks up where the dad left off." And you thought your comic fantasies were gross, huh?

Crime is everywhere. Especially around a large college campus like UC Berkeley, where people who don't jaywalk are the exception rather than the rule. A speeding skateboarder almost clips me on Durant. Cops ride their bicycles on the sidewalk, though they are not chasing criminals, just cycling over to Yogurt Park to loaf for half an hour before they cycle up to Noah's Bagels to loaf for another half an hour. Bicylists are arrogant in Berkeley, making snotty remarks about people who drive cars, while ignoring all the traffic laws, running stop signs, going the wrong way on one way streets just like Whoopi Goldberg in MADE IN AMERICA, but there is poetic justice; the most common and frequent crime in Berkeley is bicycle theft. A woman on a moped passes on the inside next to the curb on a crowded corner at Shattuck and University, nearly running over my foot. Mopeds move up between cars to get the jump on people waiting at the intersection. Who reads the Driver's manual these days? Speed limits are ignored all over town. A seasoned Berkeley driver always waits a few seconds after the green light because two or three people routinely run the red. People make sudden U-turns across a double-yellow line to steal a parking place from someone who obeyed the law and drove around the block. Exhaust fumes assault me from cars I am sure passed no legal smog check. Loud mufflers and ghettoblasters attack my ears, violating the decibel level. Political signs are posted on street and stop signs all along Sacramento, one of Berkeley's main thoroughfares. There is graffiti everywhere. Property is routinely defaced. The local buses have hard plastic seats now because the comfortable seats were slip with knives and the packing pulled out. The buses now have video cameras on passengers at all times, not to prevent crime but to identify the criminals after it is too late. Someone is robbed or assaulted every five minutes in this area and someone is murdered every other day. We used to shop at a small grocery store that sold organic food over on Cedar and King, then the owner was stabbed to death over a parking place and the store closed soon afterward because the family did not know how to sustain the business. A local paper, THE BERKELEY VOICE, lists half a page of armed robberies and assaults each week taken from the police blotter. Many people are afraid to walk in their own neighborhoods at night. A friend of mind was pistol whipped and robbed as he got out of his car to open his garage door one evening. He wasn't even given a chance to hand over his wallet, just hit in the head with a gun. Twenty stitches at the emergency room. Because theft is constant, most restaurants serve food in disposable containers and give out small packets of condiments. I used to go to Kip's when there was a salt and pepper shaker, a sugar container, and an ash tray on each table. Such things are nostalgia now.

Why am I mixing trivial crimes with those considered serious? Because *a community of people that ignores laws that are made for the protection of themselves and others creates a climate in which all kinds of crime become acceptable.* A bicyclist ran a red light on Durant and Dana one afternoon, going the wrong way on a one-way street and he ran into me in the crosswalk. I was knocked to the sidewalk and injured. I got up very angry and yelled at him about violating the law and being careless. He listened a moment, then rode off toward the campus. He didn't apologize. He didn't care. He was no different than the person who hit my friend in the head with a gun and took his money. Both got away with their crimes. Nothing was done to them. The social order has broken down. Rudeness, arrogance, amorality, and anti-social behavior are the norm and I have become an anachronism in my own town.

Rob Huizenga was team internist for the Los Angeles Raiders back in 1983. He confirms that all the things you suspected about those professional football players is true. YOU'RE OK, IT'S JUST A BRUISE [New York; St. Martin's, 1994] reveals what it's like in the Raiders' dressing room after the media people have gone home. Drugs, steroids, and go on playing or kiss your career goodbye. Nice portrait of Lyle Alzedo.

Yesterday, I saw a 15-year-old girl sitting outside Rasputin's glass record store on Durant. She was begging for money. She had little silver rings in her eyebrows, her nose, her ears, and probably other parts of her body that were not visible. How can I relate to a generation of kids that views this kind of mutilation as a rite of passage? There is a piercing parlor on Telegraph now and when I pass there are people in leather clothing standing around in front with shaved heads and pierced-up faces. Some of them wear rhinestone studs in their tongues! The Rolling Stones did several shows here last weekend and I can imagine the reaction of Mick Jagger and his band of old hippies as they looked down across those shiny bald heads and sang about Sweet Sister Cocaine.

NON-COMIC BOOKS

How do I know there are people who do horoscopes for horses? Vicki Hearne says so in ANIMAL HAPPINESS [New York: Harper, 1994]. She adopted Peppy the Wonder Horse, who, it turns out, was an Aquarian.

The new Lord of the Flies? That would have to be Robert Friedel who has just published a history called ZIPPER [New York" Norton, 1984].

For the latest on the LSD revival of the early nineties, check out Leigh Henderson and William Glass" LSD: STILL WITH US AFTER ALL THESE YEARS. [New York: Lexington, 1994]. LSD, as you recall was a gift from the good old CIA who gave it away free as part of a program known as MK-ULTRA. Our friendly government agents were trying to find an effective means of crowd control. When they discovered that people high on acid just didn't give a shit one way or the other, they scrapped the drug. Curiously, it became illegal in October of 1966 and people who continued to go on weekend trips were harassed and turned into criminals. The Henderson-Glass text is somewhat pharmacological, but interesting.

Are they still poisoning our body fluids as we learned back in DR. STRANGELOVE? Douglas Rushkoff thinks so. See his MEDIA VIRUS: HIDDEN AGENDAS IN POPULAR CULTURE. [New York: Ballantine, 1994]. Rushkoff thinks there is more to tv than you think you see. Well, we've known that since the days of THE HIDDEN PERSUADERS and SUBLIMINAL PERSUASION, but Rushkoff updates everything.

Barry Sanders doesn't think anyone wants to learn to read these days, particularly young black students. A IS FOR OX: VIOLENCE, ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND THE SILENCING OF THE WRITTEN WORD has all the details about the decline of literacy in urban high schools. [New York: Pantheon, 1994].

And how do gang members really think? Sanyika Skakur tells all in his MONSTER: AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN L.A. GANG MEMBER [New York: Penguin, 1993]. Monster was Shakur's nickname in the gang. While we're on the subject, Richard Ofshe and Ethan Watters have published MAKING MONSTERS: FALSE MEMORIES, PSYCHOTHERAPY, AND SEXUAL HYSTERIA [New York: Scribner's, 1994]. False memory syndrome means you may not remember your childhood experiences clearly and if you do you may not remember them correctly, hence you need a therapist to hypnotise you and lead you through the dark bedrooms and barns of yesteryear in search of a bogeyman who might have been your Dad or a favorite uncle or even your Mom! Lo and behold, people in their thirties and forties who can afford a hundred or a hundred and fifty bucks an hour suddenly remember being molested by their parents. For some more hundreds, revenge is near at hand; the offending parent can be sued. Entire families can be destroyed and disgraced as FMS victims make the rounds of the talk show circuit. Well, lots of people have been molested as children, but I've yet to meet anyone who forgot or repressed it; I'm sixty and the people I've talked to about the subject remember every little detail and are skeptical about those who suddenly claim Daddy molested them thirty or forty years after the fact. Ofshe and Watters interview victims and therapists and offer chapter and verse re a subject that needs to be discussed within the family.

Question is where the hell did all these Angels come from? We have Angels in San Francisco and ANGELS IN THE OUTFIELD remade by Disney and now ANGELIC HEALING. Yep. Eileen Elias Freeman saw an Angel in her room after a long operation and it changed her life. She subtitled her book WORKING WITH YOUR ANGELS TO HEAL YOUR LIFE [New York: Time Warner, 1944]. Ms. Freeman is head of the AngelWatch Foundation and publishes a newsletter four times a year.

How do I know there are surgeons who have been experimentally transplanting animal organs into humans? Deborah Blum tells all about it in THE MONKEY WARS [New York: Oxford, 1994]. Blum discusses the complex conflict between animal research and animal rights activism, noting the way contemporary research is funded by grants which would be taken away if the animals were freed from their cages.

SMITHSONIAN REVISES HISTORY OF MAD

I just had an interesting run in with the SMITHSONIAN magazine. They ran an article about Jack Kamen's son, Dean, in the November 1994 issue[1] and all the information about Jack Kamen was wrong [see p. 106] so I wrote and told them so. The article said Jack Kamen was one of the first people hired by MAD and he was *never* hired by MAD. He sold to EC, but was not on staff. I got a letter back saying *they* would stick by *their* story, in other words, I WAS WRONG. Looks like someone in the Kamen family is trying to revise the history of MAD by claiming that Jack was one of the first people hired! Jack's wife, Evelyn Kamen, told SMITHSONIAN he did the prototype for MAD.[2] Said he worked on an EC comic called CREEPSHOW. There is no such title, so I xeroxed the truth and sent it to the mag along with a follow-up letter. Kamen at MAD. Gaines didn't even mention him in the 1972 MAD WORLD OF WILLIAM M. GAINES, because Kamen never did anything for MAD. He freelanced pre-Code love and horror stories.[3] SMITHSONIAN could have checked this out in Maria Reidelbach's COMPLETELY MAD [Boston: Little, Brown, 1991]or any of several dozen sources, but what did the editor do? She called Kamen's wife! Why would Evelyn Kamen remember what her husband did over forty years ago? So much for research at that magazine. I told the editor who sent me that insulting letter I thought it was an insult to an artist to try to associate him with something he didn't do and deny what he did do.[4] I liked Kamen's stuff in the horror comics. The article even said there were some originals from the EC comics on the wall in Kamen's house. How could that be when Gaines kept all that art in his vault and Cochran has it now. No EC originals were ever returned to the artists, according to Kurtzman, so it is likely the Kamen originals are from something rejected by EC or done for another company that did return original art.

What's the point? If we are going to keep track of the history of comic art and the people who drew it, and to me this is just as valid an endeavor as keeping records on the writers of popular novels or poems, then accuracy is important and error has to be corrected, particularly when it appears in magazines that have the social prestige of the SMITHSONIAN. C.G.

[1]Steve Kemper, "Technology is Fun--and Can Make you lots of money." SMITHSONIAN, November, 1994, pp 98-111.

[2]Harvey Kurtzman did the prototype for MAD and he worked with Bill Elder, Jack Davis, Wally Wood, John Severin, and a few other EC regulars; Jack Kamen was not one of them. I don't know why, but have an idea Kamen lacked the flair for the type of humor Kurtzman was into. I met Kurtzman in 1976 when I brought him to Berkeley to guest at my Underground '76 convention at UC and we corresponded often until his death in 1993. None of his letters mention Kamen, nor did he mention him in his biography, MY LIFE AS A CARTOONIST or in his Visual History of the Comics, FROM AARGH TO ZAP.

[3]See TALES FROM THE CRYPT 31 for a story about Kamen, illustrated by himself. Gaines and Feldstein allude to the love and horror comics, not to MAD, because Kamen had nothing to do with the humor mag Kurtzman was working on in 1952.

[4]The associate editor who wrote to me had the gall to include a dictionary definition of a pulp magazine in her letter as though I didn't know what I was talking about, while she, clearly, did not know that the adventure comic magazines evolved out of pulp magazines in the mid-thirties, and that saddle-stapled comic magazines were not pulp magazines.

Yes, THE JOE BOB REPORT, that regular compendium of the best of the worst in drive-in horror films, continues into 1995. A sample from the man himself at POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. $3.